

## **Statement on transportation amendment to NRC security**

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, Markey.079, and I ask for its immediate consideration.

The purpose of this amendment is to address the risk that terrorists might target shipments of radioactive materials. We know that there are persistent problems with the current system of controls for the transportation and accounting of radioactive and other hazardous wastes.

In 1982, a truck driver picked up some highly enriched spent reactor fuel from UCLA's research reactor in order to take it to Exxon Nuclear's facility in Idaho for reprocessing. The truck driver decided that before he got on the highway, he would pick up his girlfriend – so he drove the nuclear waste through highly populated areas in and around LA for about 2 hours. They then decided that they might as well stop in Las Vegas, and they left the truck unattended in a casino parking lot for at least one night. When the truck returned to GE to give the shipping cask back, it turned out that the cask had not been properly secured, and that the entire vehicle was extensively contaminated with Cobalt 60 - at levels that were ten thousand times as high as normal background levels. The subsequent investigation revealed that UCLA did not have adequate security to protect that amount of material, that UCLA failed to notify officials along the route in advance of the shipment as they were supposed to do, and that they did publicly release their intent to ship the materials, enabling the press and any would-be terrorist to know what to look for and when to look for it.

Unfortunately, things have just gotten worse since that time. According to NRC's Annual Safeguard Summary Event List for 1999, 3 men in Chechnya were caught stealing radioactive Cobalt-60 from a facility there. It is not known what they planned to do with the materials, but we do know that Osama Bin Laden works with some of the Chechnyan factions.

And we have all read the press stories about today's real-world terrorists' successful attempts to obtain licenses to drive radioactive and hazardous waste around from an unscrupulous state examiner in Pennsylvania, and some of these reports quoted people from the trucking industry as saying that anyone with a criminal record could get a license to drive hazardous materials as long as they were over 21 years old. We can only imagine what terrorists might have planned to do with radioactive materials if they got them.

We also know from the Attorney General that we must be on guard for future terrorist attacks against other targets.

My amendment beefs up the requirements for transportation of radioactive materials. First of all, it requires that anyone authorized to drive or accompany these materials must pass a background check to determine whether they pose a security threat. Second of all, it requires NRC to develop a manifest system that accurately describes the radioactive contents of each shipment so that any recipient would know what they were receiving. Finally, it prohibits any shipments of radioactive material from being sent to anywhere other than a licensed NRC facility, an agreement state licensed facility, or an appropriate Federal facility, so that we ensure that the materials are only going places where the expertise to handle them exists.

This is the type of amendment that we need to have to respond to the threat our nation now faces. I urge support for the amendment.